

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3095

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, AS

SUBJECT: AUSTRALIAN ELECTIONS CAMPAIGN BEGINS

WITH ELECTION POLICY SPEECHES

REF: CANBERRA 2446 (NOTTAL)

1. SUMMARY: IN STRING OF ELECTION POLICY SPEECHES FROM APR 28-30 , PRINCIPAL AUSTRALIAN PARTY LEADERS SET OUT MAIN THEMES THEY WILL COVER IN TIME REMAINING BEFORE ELECTIONS MAY 18. LABOR LARGELY A REITERATION OF LABOR GOVERNMENT POLICY. LIBERAL POLICY HITS HEAVILY AT INFLATION AND OTHER ECONOMIC ISSUES (SEE SEPTTEL). DEFENSE AND FOREIGN POLICY TOUCHED ONLY ON TO MINOR DEGREE. WHEN NOMINATIONS COLSED APR 29, THERE WERE 500 CANDIDATES FOR 127 SEATS IN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND 245 CANDIDATES FOR 60 SENATE SEATS, LARGEST TOTALS EVER. RESULT WILL CERTAINLY BE SLOW VOITING, DELAYS IN COUNTING , AND RECORD NUMBER OF INVALID BALLOTS UNDER COMPLES AUSTRALIAN VOTING PROCEDURES. END SUMMARY.

2. AUSTRALIAN ELECTIONS CAMPAIGN, IN WHICH ALL 60 SEATS IN SENATE AND 127 SEATS IN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ARE

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AT STAKE, BEGAN OFFICIALLY WITH ELECTION POLICY SPEECHES

BY MINOR AUSTRALIAN PARTY AND DEMOCRATIC LABOR PARTY
APR 28, BY PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM FOR RULING AUSTRALIAN
LABOR PARTY APR 29, AND BY BILLIES M. SNEDDEN FOR OPPOSITION
LIBERAL PARTY ON APR 30. POLICY SPEECH BY COUNTRY
PARTY LEADER ANTHONY SCHEDULED FOR APR 27 WAS BLACKED
OUT BY RADIO AND TV OVERTIME BAN AND WILL BE DELIVERED
LATER.

3. NOMINATIONS CLOSED FOR FEDERAL HOUSE AND SENATE AT
NOON APR 29 (LOCAL TIME). THERE ARE 500 CANDIDATES FOR
127 SEATS IN HOUSE (COMPARED TO 125 SEATS IN OUTGOING
HOUSE) AND 245 CANDIDATES FOR 60 SEATS IN SENATE. RESULT
ALMOST CERTAINLY WILL BE LONG LINES AT POLLING BOOTHS
AND SLOW COUNT OF RESULTS , AS WELL AS PROBABLY VERY HIGH
INCIDENCE OF INVALID BALLOTS. THERE WILL BE 73 SENATE
CANDIDATES IN NEW SOUTH WALES FOR 10 SENATE SEATS.
VOTERS MUST MARK THEIR PREFERENCES IN NUMERICAL ORDER
FROM ONE TO 73, FILLING IN ALL BLANKS IN ORDER THEY
WISH. IF THEY LEAVE ONE BLANK EMPTY OR USE ONE NUMBER
TWICE, THEIR BALLOT WILL BE INVALID. NO ONE KNOWS WHAT
EFFECT LARGE NUMBER OF CANDIDATES WILL HAVE ON RESULTS.
BY COMPARISON, VOTERS IN NEW SOUTH WALES IN LAST SENATE
ELECTION HAD ONLY 20 CANDIDATES FOR 5 SENATE SEATS AND
MUCH SIMPLER PROBLEM IN MARKING BALLOTS. OTHER STATES
WILL HAVE ALMOST EQUALLY DIFFICULT MARKING PROBLEM:
48 CANDIDATES FOR 10 SENATE SEATS IN VICTORIA ; 25
CANDIDATES FOR 10 SENATE SEATS IN QUEENSLAND; 38 CANDIDATES
FOR 10 SENATE SEATS IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA; 29 CANDI-
\$-53 *94 10 SENATE SEATS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA; AND 32
CANDIDATES FOR 10 SEANTE SEATS IN TASMANIA.

4. PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM DELIVERED POLICY SPEECH IN
SYDNEY APR 29, IN HALL AND USING SAME FORMAT AS HE
DID FOR ELECTION IN DEC, 1972. SPEECH FOR MOST PART
WAS REITERATION OF LONG-ESTABLISHED LABOR PARTY POLICY,
WITH VIRTUALLY ALL EMPHASIS ON ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
ISSUES (SEE SEPTEL ON ECONOMIC POLICY). SOCIAL POLICY,
INVOLVING EXTENSIONS TO SOCIAL SECURITY, AND ABORIGINAL
POLICY , NOT OF DIRECT INTEREST TO U.S. INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS ONLY VERY BRIEFLY COVERED IN RADIO-TV SPEECH,
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BUT TEXT RELEASED TO PRESS SOMEWHAT LONGER. WHITLAM
SAID HE HAD LED AUSTRALIA TO QTE HER RIGHTFUL, PROUD,
AND SECURE PLACE IN THE WORLD....WE HAVE PLACED OUR
RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE UNITED STATES AND THE UNITED
KINGDOM ON THE BASIS OF MATURE PARTNERSHIP. WE HAVE
RENEGOTIATED THE AGREEMENT FOR THE UNITED STATES NAVAL
COMMUNICATIONS STATION AT NORTH WEST CAPE. THE AGREEMENT
SIGNED BY OUR OPPONENTS WAS A DENIAL OF AUSTRALIA'S

RIGHTS. THE NEW AGREEMENT ASSERTS AND ESTABLISHES THEM...WITH THE AGREEMENT OF ALL ITS MEMBERS , WE HAVE SECURED THE REMODELLING OF SEATO... WE HAVE ACTIVELY SUPPORTED THE OBJECTIVES OF THE ZONE OF PEACE AND NEUTRALITY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AND THE INDIAN OCEAN ZONE OF PEACE. WE HAVE MADE POWERFUL REPRESENTATIONS IN WASHINGTON AND MOSCOW TO PERSUADE THEM TO EXERCISE RESTRAINT AND NOT TO MAKE THE INDIAN OCEAN YET ANOTHER SCENE FOR GREAT POWER RIVALRY. END QTE WHITLAM, IN REFERRING TO DEFENSE POLICY, NOTED REORGANIZATION OF ARMED FORCES, RECENT EQUIPMENT DECISIONS, AND NEW CHARTER FOR RESERVE FORCES. HE CONCLUDED, QTE IN SHORT, WE HAVE MOVED STEADILY AND FIRMLY TOWARDS OUR AIM THAT AUSTRALIA SHALL HAVE THE DEFENSE FORCES SHE NEEDS-- FINELY EQUIPPED, HIGHLY PROFESSIONAL, HIGHLY MOBILE, AND HIGHLY RESPECTED. END QTE

5. ADVANCED TEXT OF SNEDDEN POLICY SPEECH FOR LIBERALS PLACES HEAVY EMPHASIS ON FIGHT AGAINST INFLATION AND OTHER ECONOMIC /FINANCIAL ISSUES (SEE SEPTTEL). ON DEFENSE AND FOREIGN POLICY, SNEDDEN STATED LABOR PARTY HAS RUN DOWN AUSTRALIAN DEFENSES AND INSULTED AUSTRALIA'S MAJOR ALLIES. HE SAID , QTE WE WILL RESTORE THE ANZUS ALLIANCE. WE WILL ENCOURAGE A CONTINUING AMERICAN PRESENCE IN AISA, THE PACIFIC , AND THE INDIAN OCEANS. WE WILL CONSULT WITH OUR PARTNERS IN THE FIVE POWER AGREEMENT AS THE BEST FORM OF AUSTRALIAN CONTRIBUTION END QTE.

6. SPEECH BY GORDON BARTON, NATIONAL CONVENOR (ACTUAL TITLE) OF AUSTRALIA PARTY, REFLECTED HIS MAVERICK APPROACH TO MOST NATIONAL ISSUES. HE ADVOCATED WITHDRAWAL FROM AUSTRALIA'S MILITARY ALLIANCES, COUPLED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WITH GREATER EMPHASIS ON TRADE PROMOTION, MUTUAL TRADE, AND NON-AGGRESSION PACTS. SPEECH BY DEMOCRATIC LABOR PARTY PARLIAMENTARY LEADER, SENATOR MCMANUS, WAS ALSO CENTERED ON DOMESTIC POLICY, BUT THERE WERE STRONG DENUNCIATIONS OF LABOR FOREIGN POLICY. MCMANUS SAID, QTE OUR FOREIGN POLICY HAS LED US TO BE CALLED IN AISA THE RUNNING DOGS OF CHAIRMAN MAO...OUR FOREIGN POLICY IS A MIXTURE OF MAUDLIN PHILANTHROPY AND UNREALISM BASED ON A BELIEF THAT AS LONG AS WE CONCILIATE COMMUNIST FORMER ENEMIES, FORMER NON-COMMUNIST FRIENDS CAN BE IGNORED. END QTE. GREEN

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